

NH Library Trustee

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The Newsletter of the New Hampshire Library Trustees Association

www.NHLTA.org

Congratulations to the 2022 NHLTA Award Winners!

As always, NHLTA received a number of impressive nominations. New Hampshire is indeed fortunate to have such fine public libraries, library employees and dedicated volunteers. After lengthy consideration, the NHLTA Board of Directors is happy to announce the following list of award winners for this year. Presentations will be made at local celebrations this fall.

Library Director of the Year (tie)

Dianne Hathaway, Goffstown Public Library
Tracy Waldron, East Kingston Public Library

Lillian Edelmann Trustee of the Year

Kathryn Parenti, Wadleigh Memorial Library, Milford

Sue Palmatier Award for Outstanding Support by a Friends of the Library Group

Friends of the Weeks Public Library, Greenland

Special Library Service Contribution Award

Robert Grano, Chesley Memorial Library, Northwood



Mildred McKay Scholarship Fund

The NHLTA Board of Directors believes that continuing education is a prime factor in providing the highest quality of library services. The Mildred McKay Scholarship Fund provides us a way to improve library services within the state.

In 1965, the NHLTA Board of Directors established the Mildred McKay Scholarship Fund in honor of the former NH State Librarian. The New Hampshire Charitable Fund manages the perpetual endowment and distributes funds to NHLTA to be awarded as scholarships on an annual basis.

This year, NHLTA has awarded three \$1,000 graduate course scholarships to: Laura Abrahamsen of George H. Bixby Memorial Library; Meredith Telschow of Kelley Library; and Liz Erikson of Goffstown Public Library.

Applications for spring 2023 semester graduate

courses must be received by November 1, 2022, and it is expected that two \$1,000 graduate course scholarships will be awarded. Applications for summer 2023 graduate courses must be received by April 1, 2023; one \$1,000 graduate course scholarship will be awarded. Applications for library conferences and workshops should be submitted approximately one month before the event. Virtual courses, conferences (including NHLTA's Annual Conference) and workshops are eligible for scholarship awards.

Criteria for scholarship eligibility and a scholarship application can be found on NHLTA's web-site, www.nhlta.org. Past McKay scholarship recipients and past no-award applicants may apply again for a scholarship for that next course, conference or workshop.

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Marcia McLaughlin
NHLTA President

Fall 2022

Each time I sit down to write my president's message I go to the NHLTA website and scan through past issues (NHLTA.org, Library News tab) to see what topics or issues might have been addressed by the president at the same time in previous years. This morning I did the same and found an article by Adele Knight, President of NHLTA in 2011, which I feel is spot on for our current time. Therefore, rather than "recreate the wheel" I am excerpting her article with an addition or two of my own.

Boards of Trustees are or will soon be preparing budgets for 2023. Due to the current economic tenor of rising cost of goods and services and an economic downturn, this is bound to be a difficult and challenging budget year. Trustee boards may be asked to hold the line, again, or to cut back on already strained budgets. Libraries compete for funding with Fire, Police and Highway Departments, and other important municipal services, too. Due to this, it is important that trustees be fully conversant with the value the library adds to their community in order to support and defend their budget. A few ideas below from Adele.

. . . as personal budgets dwindle, people look more and more to their libraries for Internet use, periodicals, downloadable books, DVDs and more. Often, readers that were in the habit of buying books now check them out from the library. Some benefits are less tangible but still affect budgets' line items. Patrons save money as they seek entertainment in the form of programs, movies and activities held at the library. Children look forward to story hour, arts and crafts, and other programs designed specially to appeal to them. However, there are associated costs with the increases of service and library usage in the form of wages, supplies, and even utilities.

Libraries have a positive and constant impact on their communities. It may be difficult to put a dollar figure to the sense of camaraderie that comes about as people of all ages meet their friends and neighbors at the library, but it is ever important. I hear over and over again from trustees

that they consider their library a community center. **And, that is because libraries offer something for everyone, and often go the extra mile to do so.** For example, some libraries offer extended hours during storms to provide a warm, comfortable place for patrons to visit and take out books, charge cell phones, or check their email. Others make special efforts to reach out to the elderly, or to help a child with special needs by utilizing Interlibrary Loan to obtain a selection of otherwise unaffordable or unavailable books. Or, encourage reading by making books available to children who have expressed a real interest in a particular topic.

It is important to promote libraries by speaking up, speaking out, and speaking for them whenever and wherever possible. Make your community aware of all the benefits and services that are provided by your library.

Let your community know why those budget dollars are so important. I offer a few suggestions:

- Submit articles about your library services to the town newsletter.
- Do a cost analysis. If you equate the cost of books, magazines, DVDs and programs to real dollars saved by borrowing rather than purchasing, it makes an impact. One library creatively presented this analysis on a mock FORM 1040.
- Track statistics so you can demonstrate any growth in daily attendance, program attendance, Interlibrary Loan usage, and circulation.
- When preparing your budgets, include a narrative for every line item that explains why you are requesting that amount of money. For example, if you are recommending an increase in salary for a staff member, demonstrate that you have done your homework and know what similar staff in similar libraries are being paid. Or, list the cost of every item in your maintenance budget including service contracts.

Invite town officials and budget committees into your library to see for themselves what the appropriations provide. How can they not be impressed?

- Ask the officials to share their goals. Tell them about the goals for your library. You may find that

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It is important to promote libraries by speaking up, speaking out, and speaking for them whenever and wherever possible.

Practical Tips for Library Trustees Regarding Challenges

As we expected, we are seeing a rise in book challenges in our New Hampshire public libraries as we enter the fall. This is not surprising given the challenges that have been seen in other states. These challenges are not just individual parents concerned about their child's exposure to a particular book. Many challenges are the result of a well-funded effort by national organizations to censor materials in schools and libraries.

Here is a short list of practical tips for New Hampshire library trustees regarding challenges – please share this and discuss with your whole Library Board of Trustees, so that everyone is on the same page with communications.

- **No one board member should act on their own or speak as though they represent the Library Board of Trustees without the explicit permission of the whole board (usually through a recorded vote) to be the representative for the board in public, which includes personal posts on social media.**

This is a key concept that needs to be discussed by every board. For example, once a board decision is reached on a topic, no matter how a board member voted or if they agree or disagree with the decision of the body, individual board members need to remember that they must support the board decision in public. If an individual feels they cannot do that, their best course of action is to resign from that board so that the association of that individual with the board is terminated. This is not to suggest that individuals should not have their own opinion. Trustees need to be aware of how they are being perceived. The decisions of the board when you are perceived as a board member take precedence over your individual opinion. Ask yourself – if there was a personnel issue at your library, would you as an elected trustee go on social media to discuss your opinion about the situation? Of course not. The same applies here to book and program challenges.

- **Lock down your personal social media accounts.** Some challengers are being taught by chapters of national organizations about how to

audit personal social media accounts to “prove” their point about the need for censorship. Change your social media settings to private and only allow friends to view your posts. Be careful about accepting follows or friend requests from those you do not know in real life. If you need help with social media settings, ask your library director for assistance.

- **Active Listening is key to being a library trustee.** What is active listening? Being attentive to the person speaking, noting body language as well as words, and above all listening to hear, not listening to respond. This is particularly important during Trustee meetings, since Public Comment sections of the meeting agenda are about the Trustees listening to what the public has to say...but not responding or having a dialogue with the person making the public comment. Listening is more important than reacting. The Board is not required to respond immediately to any public comment offered at a public meeting, because the Board acts as a unit and may need time to discuss the topic as a Board.

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By Lori Fisher, Assistant State Librarian at the NH State Library

NHLA Intellectual Freedom Committee

Are you concerned with the rising tide of Book Challenges and Bans in New Hampshire? Are you looking for a constructive way to make a difference?

The New Hampshire Library Association has reinstated their Intellectual Freedom Committee (IFC). The Committee is a boots-on-the-ground way information can be gathered about the current state of Book Challenges in New Hampshire. Sadly, many book challenges go unreported, and IFC is attempting to collect as much information as possible to have a better picture of what is currently happening in our state. The IFC recently drafted a form that can be submitted anonymously by library workers, volunteers, trustees or anyone concerned about forms of censorship in libraries. The form can be found at <https://forms.gle/DudKqdfyJiAxuCUi8>.

One form of challenges rarely discussed but on a sharp rise is “soft censorship” or the decision by library staff or officials to not include an item because it might have the potential to be viewed as controversial. Such choices are contrary to the Library Bill of Rights and Freedom to Read Statements. If you think you have witnessed soft censorship, please fill out the above form.

For more information, please visit the NHLA website at nhlibrarians.org.

Smyth Library's Christmas Flood



ABOVE: Cleanup begins at the Smyth Library in Candia.

BELOW RIGHT: Celebrating the reopening of the library on July 27, 2022.

Smyth Public Library Director Heidi Deacon lives close to the library, so it's not unusual for her to pop in even on her days off. But on December 25, 2021, Heidi and her family were away for the holiday. It was Christmas!

The next morning, she got a call and went in to the library, opened the door and water gushed out. After shutting the water off, the town's fire department was alerted.

The cause of the flood? A sprinkler head near the roof in the reference area had failed. The sprinkler system, checked every year, had been serviced

the previous July, however, the alarm notifying the fire department triggered improperly and failed as well. The worst of the damage was in the reference section, but because there had been several feet of water throughout the entire library for a couple of days, all of the flooring would have to be replaced. In order to do that, everything would have to be removed. All the shelving and approximately 30,000 items would have to be put in storage while the damage was repaired.

Concerned about the library's patrons, Heidi contacted Bobbi Slosser at the NH State Library, and both she and Heidi contacted neighboring towns to see if Candia residents could use their libraries while the Smyth Library was closed. The Hooksett Public Library, the Chester Public Library, the Dudley-Tucker Library

(Raymond) and the Griffin Free Public Library (Auburn) generously provided temporary library privileges to Candia patrons, which took some of the pressure off Heidi and her staff and allowed them to concentrate on repairs.

The community came together to help the library as well. Fire Department Chief Dean Young was solicited by Heidi to serve as construction manager for the repairs. One of the biggest concerns was the beautiful cherrywood cabinetry. The chief knew a skilled woodworker and together they meticulously removed the cabinets, saving



thousands in reconstruction costs. Other community members were recruited by Heidi for electrical work, flooring and painting.

Even though the damage was covered by insurance, the process didn't run smoothly. Thanks to the pandemic, materials were back-ordered and it wasn't until mid-May that the shelves were able to be put back up and the process of reshelving the books could begin. Heidi had come down with COVID early in January and as a result, many of the books had been boxed in random order and not labeled as accurately as she and the staff would have liked. "The books are generally in the right area," she said.

Even though the books were unavailable to patrons, Smyth Library was able



to continue with their electronic material offerings through OverDrive, hoopla and Kanopy. Heidi also set up online programs and, once

the weather warmed, she was able to use the library's gazebo for a trivia night and weekly story times and other outdoor programs. The library was able to continue their seed loan program, handing out over 100 seed packets in March!

Smyth Public Library reopened on July 27, 2022, celebrating with cake and one of their weekly summer concert series. Heidi, the library staff and trustees couldn't be more grateful for all the help they received. "What I love about being a librarian, we all want the best for each other," Heidi said. "People are on your team and they want you to succeed!"

LIBRARY ANNUAL REPORTS:

When are they due? What should they include?

Fortunately, RSA 202-A:12 is very specific regarding the information to be included in the Annual Report. The Board Treasurer should report on the first four items; the Library Director and the Board Chair report on the last three including a list of programs, workshops, classes, and any other services such as meeting room usage offered by the library that further the education of the public.

202-A:12 Annual Reports. Every library regularly open to the public, or to some portion of the public, with or without limitations, whether its ownership is vested in the town, in a corporation, in an organization or association, or in individuals, shall make a written report to the town or city at the conclusion of each fiscal year of

- (a) all receipts from whatever sources,
- (b) all expenditures,
- (c) all property in the trustees' care and

custody, including a statement and explanation of any unexpended balance of money they may have,

- (d) and any bequests or donations they may have received and are holding in behalf of the town, with such recommendations in reference to the same as they may deem necessary for the town to consider,
- (e) the total number of books and other materials and the number added by gift, purchase and otherwise; the number lost or withdrawn,
- (f) the number of borrowers and readers and a statement of the use of the property of the library in furthering the educational requirements of the municipality and such other information and suggestions as may seem desirable,
- (g) submit a similar report to the state librarian at such time and on such forms as the commissioner of cultural resources may require.

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Library Trustees Association

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POSTMASTER:

Return Service Requested

Managing the Library's Budget and Finances

By Natch Greyes and
Katherine Heck

Does the board need a Treasurer?

RSA 202-A:11, III states, in relevant part, that the trustees are charged with “[e]xpend[ing] all moneys raised and appropriated by the town or city for library purposes and *shall direct that such moneys be paid over by the town or city treasurer* pursuant to a payment schedule as agreed to by the library trustees and the selectmen or city council.”

If the library trustees choose to use the town treasurer for treasurer duties, they should work out an agreement with the town's governing body that the town will do some or all of library financial functions. The library trustees approve all payables and payroll, but they are on the Select Board's manifest, and the town treasurer pays out on sums approved by the Select Board from the town general fund.

If the library board of trustees chooses to do its own bookkeeping, the town treasurer pays over sums to the trustees as approved at the annual meeting. There is no further relationship between the town treasurer and library, and it would not necessarily be advisable for the town treasurer to also function in the capacity as the library treasurer. Only the library trustees have custody of the funds.

No matter which method they choose, the trustees should appoint one of their members to the position of treasurer in order to ensure that one person is charged with keeping track of the financial records.

Do we need two people to sign checks? Can the library director sign checks? We have a bookkeeper; can the bookkeeper sign checks?

The trustees should review reports on ALL accounts at every meeting and approve expenses. While one signature may be sufficient, internal controls should be in place to ensure that no one person has the ability to initiate, approve, certify and release funds without the approval of the trustees. Except for a possible petty cash account that the director might manage and sign checks for,

board-designated trustees are the only persons who should sign the library's checks. It is best practice that the library trustees maintain control of all finances and select a board treasurer. The trustees may hire a bookkeeper, or a public accountant, or a private service to assist with financial functions and record keeping, with the understanding that trustees are responsible for and maintain control over all finances. The bookkeeper should not have the authority to sign checks, as this would not meet best practice standards for the segregation of duties and oversight over public funds.

Our treasurer says the financial report is confidential. We're talking about public funds. Is his statement correct? Does a person have the right to see the library's financials?

According to RSA 91-A:4, I, “Every citizen during the regular or business hours of all public bodies or agencies, and on the regular business premises of such public bodies or agencies, has the right to inspect all governmental records in the possession, custody, or control of such public bodies or agencies, including minutes of meetings of the public bodies, and to copy and make memoranda or abstracts of the records or minutes so inspected, except as otherwise prohibited by statute or RSA 91-A:5.” In other words, barring some exception, any documents in possession of the trustees or library would be subject to disclosure.

Sensitive financial information – such as account numbers or information that could allow someone to commit fraud – would be allowed to be (and should be) redacted. However, basic information such as how much money the library has, how much has been spent, etc. would be subject to public disclosure.

What are lapsed funds? How can we pay for a book order placed before the end of one fiscal year if we don't get the invoice until the following year?

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Natch Greyes,
Government Affairs
Counsel, NH Municipal
Association (NHMA)



Katherine Heck,
Government Finance
Advisor, NH Municipal
Association (NHMA)

All money obtained by the library – whether through fines, small donations, copier fees, etc. – becomes public money as soon as it comes into the hands of the library. All public funds must be able to be accounted for.

Lapsed funds are those monies which exist but which can no longer be spent. RSA 32:7 states that all money appropriated for town business lapses (i.e., cannot be spent) after the end of the year in which it is appropriated. (For some towns this will be the calendar year; others may use a fiscal year.)

There are, however, exceptions to this rule contained in the statute. One of the most common is “legally-enforceable obligations.” A contract is such an exemption. For example, if the library places an order for the book before Christmas, the order itself creates a contract, even though that may not be fulfilled instantly (such as when a book is bought at a physical book seller and money is exchanged at the counter).

If *no* exception applies, then the money would be returned to the unassigned fund balance at the end of the year.

When do we get the money from the town that was appropriated for the library at town meeting? What is an MOU? Do we need to have one?

RSA 202-A:11, III states, in relevant part, that the trustees are charged with “[e]xpend[ing] all moneys raised and appropriated by the town or city for library purposes.” Technically, that means that the money can be spent as soon as approved by town meeting. (For those in calendar year towns, RSA 32:13, II states, in relevant part, that the spending authority may “make expenditures between January 1 and the date a budget is adopted which are reasonable in light of prior year’s appropriations and expenditures for the same purposes during the same time period.”)

However, different towns have different approaches to cash flow. MOUs – memorandum of understanding – are useful because they get everyone on the same page as to how money can (and should) be spent. It is helpful to understand that money doesn’t come into a town on a consistent basis. Property tax bills – which happen a couple of times a year – are the big waves of money, but other sources of revenue also bring in money. The officials and employees charged with managing the municipal finances must ensure that there is enough ready cash at all times to ensure that the municipality (and all its entities) can meet their obligations. As a consequence, in some towns, it

may be possible for the municipal governing body to say to the trustees “You have \$X for this year, you can spend it whenever,” but in other towns, the governing body would say “You have \$X for this year, but you can only spend half through Y-date” because of the way that the municipal finances are structured.

Should we set a limit on the library director spending petty cash?

Petty cash should be the mechanism of last resort to make payments, when other disbursement methods are impractical or cannot be used. Petty cash should not be used as an operating fund. *Petty Cash Procedures* should be developed and should include detailed procedures for the handling of petty cash transactions. In addition to establishing the dollar limit and outlining the specific procedures for authorization, access and accountability of petty cash funds, another effective internal control is the performance of frequent, random, unannounced audits. Because of the high risks associated with petty cash, some libraries have implemented credit card or purchasing card programs to eliminate the need for petty cash transactions altogether.

We are thinking about getting a credit card for the library. Who should be able to use it? Should we set a limit on how much? Should we approve spending ahead of time?

As with purchasing policies, policies governing credit card usage tend to be more procedural in nature, outlining the specific steps, documentation and other requirements necessary to achieve the benefits noted above and to establish the controls needed to avoid misuse/abuse of the program. The following controls are recommended to ensure the ongoing success of a purchasing card program:

- Written policies and procedures for internal staff;
- Instructions on employee responsibility and written acknowledgments signed by the employee;
- Spending and transaction limits for each cardholder both per transaction and on a monthly basis;
- Written requests for higher spending limits;
- Recordkeeping requirements, including review and approval processes;

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- Clear guidelines on the appropriate use of purchasing cards;
- Guidelines for making purchases by phone and fax or over the Internet;
- Periodic audits for card activity and retention of sales receipts and documentation of purchases;
- Procedures for handling disputes and unauthorized purchases;
- Procedures for card issuance and cancellation, lost or stolen cards, and employee termination; and
- Segregation of duties for payment approvals, accounting and reconciliation.

Should we buy a cash register? We keep fine money, small donations, and copier fees in coffee cans. Is that ok?

Coffee cans are really not an acceptable manner for keeping public monies as they are accessible to anyone. All money obtained by the library – whether through fines, small donations, copier fees, etc. – becomes public money as soon as it comes into the hands of the library. All public funds must be able to be accounted for, and it is important to follow best practices to ensure that public funds are not mislaid, misplaced, lost, or stolen. A locked cash box, small safe or locked cash register would be more appropriate. Procedures for making regular deposits of funds should also be developed to ensure an accurate accounting.

Do we need separate bank accounts for the different library income? Can we use QuickBooks for the different accounts?

There is no statutory obligation to have separate bank accounts for different income sources. However, all income and expenses that are taxpayer/public funds must have separate and distinct accounting from any private funds held by the library. Transactions and budget line detail must be clearly delineated for all uses of trust funds; donations and grants, fines, and income-generating equipment must be properly recorded. State or federal accounting reports may be required.

There is no statutory obligation to use (or not use) a specific accounting software for municipal business. QuickBooks is probably the most commonly used financial software in the world across a variety of platforms. Your municipality

may have municipal software with the ability for the library to purchase a subscription. The advantage in having the same software is that it can streamline reporting, save money on software costs, and is designed for government financial accounting purposes.

Should the library director or the trustees present the budget to the Select Board or the budget committee?

Even though *Town of Littleton v. Taylor*, 138 N.H. 419 (1994), clarified that libraries are *not* just another municipal department, they are treated that way during the budget process. While RSA 202-A:11, II requires the trustees to prepare the budget for the library, that budget must still go through the ordinary budget process outlined in RSA chapter 32. As such, it must be presented to either the governing body of the municipality or the budget committee, as appropriate. Often the trustees will ask the librarian to either present the budget or be present to answer questions.

What's the difference between a municipal budget committee and an advisory budget committee?

An official budget committee – also called a municipal budget committee – is governed by the provisions of the municipal budget law, RSA chapter 32, and created in accordance with RSA 32:14. There are certain statutory provisions related to its role and responsibilities during the budget process, as well as membership and other obligations. Most importantly, RSA 32:16, I, obligates the official budget committee to create the budget for the municipality and, therefore, that would be the body to which the trustees would present their proposed budget.

An advisory budget committee is different because it is not governed by the provisions of RSA chapter 32, but it may be created by the municipality (typically the governing body) to assist the governing body in its role in creating the municipal budget. RSA 32:24. Depending on the exact process, that may mean that the advisory budget committee is the body to which budgetary presentations are given, or it may be the governing body.

In the absence of any budget committee, the governing body would be the body to which the

Continued on next page

All income and expenses that are taxpayer/public funds must have separate and distinct accounting from any private funds held by the library.

Library Director/Board Chair Relationship Workshop

The relationship between the Library Director and the Chair of the Board of Trustees is essential to the smooth operation of a public library. If this is an effective partnership, this will positively impact the operation of the library, the people serving as employees and trustees, as well as the patrons of the library. If the relationship is ineffective or contentious, the impact will be negative and may result in employee or board turnover, or poor public perception of the library in the community.

Library Director and Board Chair pairs are invited to participate in an interactive virtual two-part workshop in November to engage in conversation with one another about their roles, responsibilities, and working relationship to develop a path to strengthen this critical organizational relationship:

The two sessions will be held from 8:30 am to 10 am on Thursday, November 3 and Thursday, November 17. Each session will include opportunities for the Board Chair/Library Director pairs to work directly with one another as well as with their peer group (i.e., all Board Chairs in one group, and all Directors in another group). There will be a short homework assignment to complete in between the two sessions.

This workshop is not just for Library Directors and Board Chairs who are having issues. This is for ALL Library Directors and Board Chairs who wish to build a stronger relationship for the benefit of their library community. Many of the themes within these workshops can be shared with other incoming trustees as well as upcoming board chairs and could easily transform the overall working relationship between the full Board and the library director.

Registration will be completed by the Library Director, who must register both individuals (so that the presenter knows who is paired with whom). Board Chairs/Trustees, please speak with your Library Director to register for this free professional development workshop. Both parties must attend both workshop sessions and agree to complete the homework assigned between sessions.

This workshop will be led by Teri Bordenave, a long-time consultant for non-profit organizations both for employees and Board members. Her biography can be found at the Consultants Resource Bank page under Resources at nhnonprofits.org.

Questions? Contact Lori Fisher, Assistant State Librarian, lori.a.fisher@dnrc.nh.gov, 603-271-2393.

By Lori Fisher, Assistant State Librarian at the NH State Library

Legal Q&A *continued from previous page*

trustees would present their proposed budget, and the governing body would be the body which proposes the overall budget of the town.

Can the selectboard or the budget committee change the library's budget's bottom line before it is voted on at town meeting? Can they change any line items?

Yes. Regardless of which board is the one charged with crafting the municipal budget to be debated and voted on at town meeting, that body has the authority to change any municipally proposed budget, including the library trustees. See RSA

32:5. However, even if the municipal governing body or the budget committee decides to change the proposed budget for the library, the library trustees can still obtain their original budget amounts by having a trustee make a motion – like any other citizen – to modify the amounts allocated to the library at town meeting. Or, depending on timing, the trustees could gather the necessary signatures to submit a petitioned warrant article for additional amounts to be allocated to the library.



Letter from the President

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many of your goals are mutual. The more others know about your library, the more likely it is that you will gain their support.

- Help all libraries by supporting the Interlibrary Loan van service. Go to the NHLTA website to learn about ways that you can help.

In summary, Libraries provide essential services and make a huge and constant impact on the communities they serve. Trustees should continue to speak out and advocate for recognition and funding for their libraries.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marcia".

August 9 Budget Finance Workshop

By Connie Kirwin,
NHLTA Board of
Directors

Approximately 50 trustees and library directors attended the workshop which included presentations by Bill Gould, Trustee Chair and Treasurer (retired), Whipple Library, New Boston; Jennifer McCormack, Director, Nashua Public Library; and Tod Fabian, Director, Concord Public Library. While the general consensus was that the content was helpful, it was felt that there was too much emphasis on city libraries and not enough on small libraries.

Topics discussed included preparing a budget and presenting it to the town, memorandums of understanding, fundraising and accepting donations. It should be noted that all outside money needs to be accepted by the trustees, including grants.

Suggestions for future presentations included having a library director and trustee as co-presenters; information on libraries that use the town as their bookkeeper and libraries that process their own financial transactions; using more charts and diagrams; budget advocacy, and perhaps a mock presentation of a budget to a Budget Committee or Select Board.



Bill Gould



Jennifer McCormack



Tod Fabian

2023 Spring Conference Update

The theme of the 2023 Conference will be 1st Amendment: Censorship & Advocacy – an important topic at any time, but especially now. NHLTA is pleased to announce that Martin Garnar, director of the Amherst College Library in Massachusetts, will be our keynote speaker.



Martin Garnar

Martin is a frequent speaker on ethics and intellectual freedom and served as editor of the 10th edition of the ALA Intellectual Freedom Manual. He has also served as chair of ALA's Intellectual Freedom Committee and the Committee on Professional Ethics as well as president of the Freedom to Read Foundation. Martin lives in western Massachusetts with his husband Mark and their adorable miniature dachshunds.

You suggested, we listened!

In response to many suggestions regarding information overload, we decided to reduce the number of workshops, replacing the last sessions with roundtables to facilitate networking and providing more opportunities for interaction. These will be preceded by a Dessert Social.

Save the Date

Tuesday,

May 9, 2023

Grappone Center,
Concord



Practical Tips

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■ **If you as an individual trustee are approached by a person who wants to discuss a challenge, focus any response you provide on your library's challenge process and the existence of a board-approved Collection Development policy.** There is no need to discuss the book itself, or the genre of the book, or anything about the book or author. Your role in that conversation is to provide guidance for how an individual can submit a challenge to be considered using the policies and process that the Library Board of Trustees has put in the place. You can acknowledge a challenger's strong feelings around the situation without agreeing with them or stating that you will act for them. They must follow the policies and processes that the whole board has approved. Above all, never agree to take someone else's concerns about a book or program to the board – such an action circumvents the board-approved process and policies in place. Library Directors have been strongly encouraged to make sure their library's Reconsideration Form and Collection Development

Policy are readily available through the library web site.

■ **Do not take anything that is said by any individual during a challenge as a personal attack.** As noted in the beginning of this article, this is a concerted national movement to censor information. Try to stay above the contentious name-calling and generalizations that many challengers use in their arguments. Focus on your library's process and policies.

While the NH State Library does not have governance authority over any of our state's public libraries, we are here to help you navigate challenging situations in your communities. We can help with preparation of your staff and trustees and can help connect you with resources. We would like to know if there are any challenges occurring in your community. Please reach out to State Librarian Michael York (603-271-2397) or Lori Fisher, Assistant State Librarian (lori.a.fisher@dn-cr.nh.gov, 603-271-2393) at any time.

This summer, the East Kingston Public Library and Jones General Store joined together to offer a Farmers Market series in July, August and September.





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